

S P E E C H

16-73

OF

John Alexander
HON. MR. McCCLERNAND, OF ILLINOIS,

ON THE

OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION,

JANUARY 8, 1846.

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S P E E C H .

In the Committee of the Whole upon the state of the Union, January 8, 1846, upon the following resolution and amendment:

"Mr. C. J. Ingersoll reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the following resolution, to wit:

"*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,* That the President of the United States forthwith cause notice to be given to the Government of Great Britain, that the convention between the United States and Great Britain concerning the territory of Oregon, of August 6, 1827, signed at London, shall be annulled and abrogated, at the expiration of the term of twelve months from and after the said notice shall be given, conformably to the second Article of said convention."

To which, Mr. Hilliard, of Alabama, offered the following amendment, to wit: Strike out the words "forthwith cause notice to be given," and insert "be empowered whenever in his judgment, the public welfare may require it to give notice."

Mr. McClelland having succeeded in obtaining the floor over many competitors, and amidst much excitement, after order was restored, proceeded to address the Committee.

The objections (he said) which had been taken to the resolution, had been made to assume a two-fold form, first, that Congress possessed no constitutional authority to enact such a measure, as a *law*—second, admitting such authority to exist, that it would be inexpedient to do so.—Dissenting from both of these objections, I will (said Mr. McClelland,) according to the best of my ability, endeavor to answer and rebut them. Upon the question of title to the Oregon Territory, I have but little to say, otherwise than incidentally; that question is as far settled as public opinion in this country can settle it. The people and the Government in all of its departments which have spoken upon the subject, have affirmed the validity of our title. At the last session of Congress I expressed my views upon the subject at large, and I hope not without some success in elucidating it. I believed then and I believe now our title to be valid and exclusive, and assuming this position to be true—to be established, I will pass to the consideration of the question immediately under consideration. The third Article of the convention of October, 1818, between

the United States and Great Britain, provides "that any country that may be claimed by either party, on the northwest coast of America, westward of the Stony mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the present convention, to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two powers, &c."

The convention between the same parties, of August, 1827, in its first article, stipulates: "All the provisions of the third article of the convention concluded between the United States of America and his majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the 20th of October, 1818, shall be, and they are hereby, further indefinitely extended and continued in force, in the same manner as if all the provisions of the said article were herein specifically recited."

The second article of the latter convention provides: "It shall be competent, however, to either of the contracting parties, in case either should think fit, at any time after the 20th of October, 1828, on giving due notice of twelve months to the other contracting party, to annul and abrogate this convention; and it shall, in such case, be accordingly entirely annulled and abrogated, after the expiration of the said term of notice."

These stipulations form the basis of the present debate, and have proved to be the source of all the difficulties and agitations which now perplex the *Oregon question*. Jupiter, according to profane history, jealous of the gifts of the rest of the Gods, endowed Pandora with a box, as a token of hope and peace, but to the surprise of the donee, and to the misfortune of mankind, this emblem, so fair and promising to the imagination, proved to be the source of all evil—from its contents were scattered forth over the world the seeds of complicated ills—disease, strife, and violence. So sir, with these fatal stipulations, adopted as a pledge of peace and amity—"to prevent disputes and controversies," they have provoked controversy and well nigh plunged friendly nations, against their consent, into the horrors of war.

Let them therefore, be rescinded, the sooner the better; and particularly by the action of the law making power. By such a course the parties now fettered and bound, will be remitted to

their original conditions, and thus left free to do whatsoever their interests, their honors and justice may require. But to this objection has been made, upon the ground of the incompetency of Congress, under the constitution, to *abrogate* treaties. Treating of this point, the minority of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, in their adverse report, say:

"The House by its resolution, might declare that it was expedient or inexpedient to give this notice; and if in the one form or the other, the President might or might not give heed to it.—*But it has no power to originate, or to concur in a legislative proceeding, whether in the form of joint resolution or bill, to authorize this notice to be given. It can neither give nor withhold power to that end.*

"It is conceded that the concurrence of the House in a resolution, or bill, authorizing this notice, would not in any degree affect its validity. *But its adoption by the two departments of government, in the form of a legislative proceeding, would transfer it from the treaty making to the law-making power, and in this mode the incidental, but important question, whether the assent of two thirds of the Senate would be necessary, might be evaded. It would also tend to break down the partition of our government among various branches, by mixing up the House in an operation which the constitution had entrusted to other functionaries. And why should the House, by a violation of all propriety in form, and without any effective authority over the subject, make itself a party to this proceeding? If the notice be expedient and proper, it has become so without its act. It is rendered so by the refusal of the President to arbitrate the controversy, and by his closing further negotiation.*"

From these doctrines, I totally dissent.—Even if the President and Senate alone possess the power to originate treaties, it does not follow that Congress cannot abrogate them. This question refers itself to two tests, as a general proposition to the principles of political science, as a special one, to the constitution. In either point of view, I affirm the competency of Congress to act upon the subject. The powers of government are usually apportioned among three departments. The Executive which is charged with the execution of the laws—the legislative which is charged with the duty of making laws—and the judiciary to which is assigned the duty of expounding and administering the laws. To neither one of these departments, distinct from the others, does the treaty making power naturally appertain—with no one to the exclusion of the others does it harmoniously blend.—It rests upon no positive authority which can give it an operative energy upon national sovereignty, but finds its sanction and efficiency in the necessities, consent and faith of nations. It is a power *vis generis*, blending itself with government as a whole, rather than with any of its branches

or elementary divisions—it operates by *contract*, and binds by the *canons of morality*.—Wherefore then can it be properly classed with the executive any more than with the legislature or the judiciary, or with the latter, any more than with the former. The truth is, the *forms* of its exercise must be according to the *principles* and *organization* of the particular government.

The constitution of the United States, so far modifies this general principle, as to delegate an exclusive authority to the President and Senate to *make* treaties; but in another clause it in effect delegates a co-ordinate power to Congress to *abrogate* them. It declares that "the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance" of the constitution, "and all treaties made, or which shall be made under the authority of the United States, shall be the *supreme law* of the land." Treaties therefore, are placed upon the same footing of *other laws*, and like them, are declared to be the "*supreme law of the land*." What now is the power of Congress over the *laws* of the land? The constitution declares that "*all legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States*." Congress, therefore, by virtue of this provision, is vested with a legislative jurisdiction limited only by the *terms* of the constitution and the *forms* of our system of government.—Hence Congress may annul a *treaty*—being a *law*—although expressly excluded from the formation of treaties. It is limited only in the *origination* of laws, and that only in the instance of *treaties*, but has plenary power to *abrogate* all laws, whether existing in the form of treaties or of legislative enactment, subject of course, to any rights which may have been legally vested under them.

It was in virtue of this power and upon this principle that Congress, in 1798, abrogated the treaty of "amity and commerce," and the treaty of "alliance," between the United States and Louis the XVI, King of France, of February, 1798. This act after reciting the causes inducing it, is in these words: "*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled*, That the United States are of right, free and exonerated from the stipulations of the treaties, and of the consular convention, heretofore concluded between the United States and France; and that the same shall not henceforth be regarded as legally obligatory on the government or citizens of the United States." It is submitted, however, whether the President and Senate can by treaty, abrogate a law of Congress. Their authority being special and forming an exception to the general legislative grant, it is perhaps, more than doubtful whether they can supersede a legislative enactment. The power of repeal may not be reciprocal between the treaty and law making branches of government.—Again, Congress may "*declare war, and grant letters of marque and reprisal*." This power

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evidently carries with it that of annulling treat-
ties; for war and a treaty of amity cannot exist
between the same parties at the same time.

Convenience, it is true, Mr. Chairman, might
elect the President and Senate as the more ap-
propriate agents to make treaties, but the inter-
ests of the country and the safety of its institu-
tions would be no doubt, as well subserved by vest-
ing a co-ordinate power to annul them in Con-
gress. For such a purpose, such a lodgement of
power would, doubtless, be as safe and judicious,
as in the more aristocratical and less responsible
combination of the President and Senate. Abun-
dant evidences of the truth of this assertion may
be found in the history of the country. One in-
stance I will here mention, reserving others for a
place in another part of my speech. Congress
passed a law in March, 1839, authorizing the
President "to employ, at his discretion, the en-
tire naval and military forces of the United
State, and any portion of the militia of the
United States," and also placed at his disposal,
\$10,000,000, to enforce, by arms if necessary,
our right to exclusive jurisdiction over that part
of Maine then in dispute between us and Great
Britain. Yet in August, 1842, a treaty was
concluded by the President and Senate, with
that power, which nullified the patriotic decree of
Congress, which dimembered Maine and Mas-
sachusetts, of 3,207,800 acres of free soil—
which transferred a portion of the free citizens of
the United States, without their consent, to a
foreign monarchy, which lost to us the mountain
range won by the revolution, and retained by the
treaty of peace, of 1783, as a barrier against in-
vasion, and which exposed our northeastern fron-
tier to the frowning batteries and formidable ar-
maments of a contiguous rival from Lake Pohen-
agamoc on the northeast, to the Lake of the
Woods on the northwest. From these consid-
erations, I am, sir, in favor of *repeal*—yes, *legis-*
lative repeal of the convention. I am in favor of
this measure because, in the form it is proposed,
it will tend in itself to impose a wholesome
check upon the treaty making power, because it
will bring the President and Senate closer, and
render them practically more responsible to the
people—and because too, the President has re-
commended in his late message, that "provision
by *law* be made for terminating it."

Democrats, Mr. Chairman, should be ever ac-
tive and vigilant in preserving the checks and bal-
ances of free government—they should remember
that the "price of liberty is eternal vigilance."
That the advances of power are as insid-
ious as they are dangerous. When we recur to
the history of the world, we find that mankind
have been divided into two great political parties
in all ages—the party of the *many* and the party
of the *few*—the party of justice and equality, and
the party of privilege and privileged *orders*.—
The one party has struggled with a disinterested
benevolence to restrain the excesses of power,
by diffusing it among the masses, the other has

endeavored with a proud and persevering selfish-
ness, to render it irresponsible by concentrating
it in a small compass and placing it above the
people. Need I recur to examples to prove the
truth of this assertion? A touching incident oc-
curs in Niebuhr's History of Rome, which I will
repeat in the eloquent and graphic language of
the historian, as equally curious and instructive.
In the latter days of the first period of Roman
monarchy, closing with the reign of Tarquin the
Proud, the plebeian order were treated as mere
machines; liable to be used or abused by the pa-
tricians, to almost any purpose their selfishness
or rapacity might dictate—they were liable to be
required to fight the battles of their country; yet
were denied even lands for their habitation in
the territories conquered by their valor—the
profits of war were appropriated as the spoils of
victory by the patricians, they were denied the
right of appeal under the *Falerian law*, from the
unjust and cruel judgments of the consuls upon
the issues of life and property, and moreover,
were liable to be sold into the most degrading
and revolting slavery, for debt. These accumu-
lated oppressions and outrages, the plebeians
had for many years struggled in vain to throw
off. Ultimately, however, a spark set fire to
the inflammable material, which kindling into
the premonitions of a civil war, served for a sea-
son to afford them a *respite*, although, as they
thought, a permanent protection against tyranny.
"An old man who had escaped from his credi-
tors' prison, in squalid rags, pale and famishing,
with haggard beard and hair, cried in agony to
the Quirites for help. A crowd gather around
him; he showed them the bloody marks of his
inhuman treatment, he told them that after hav-
ing fought eight and twenty battles, his house
and farm yard had been plundered and burnt by the
enemy; the famine during the Etruscan war had
compelled him to sell his all; he had been forced
to borrow; his debt through usury had run up to
many times its original amount; whereupon his
creditors had obtained judgment against him and
his two sons, and had put them in chains. Dis-
figured as his features were, many recognised a
brave Captain; compassion, indignation spread
an uproar through the whole city, and the mea-
sures taken to compose the internal dissensions,
gave birth to an institution, of a nature wholly
peculiar; which spread the majesty and the em-
pire of the Roman people, and preserved for a
time, the republic from revolutions and tyranny;
I mean the tribunate."

This was the glorious achievement of justice
and humanity—of right over might—of the suf-
fering many over the scheming few. But the
triumph was soon shorn of much of its fruits.—
The patricians anticipating the necessity of
making a concession to appease the crushed and
lacerated multitude, had already contrived the
means of partially re-enslaving them. Availing
themselves of a conjuncture in the previous strug-
gle favorable to the authority of *one* man, a dic-

tator was established—elevated above the laws, the Senate and the people, who in turn lent the despotic authority of his office to the patricians. The same historian, writing of this officer says: "the object aimed at in the institution of the dictatorship was to evade the 'Valerian laws,' and to re-establish the unlimited authority of the patricians, over the plebeians, even within the barriers and the mole of their liberties, for the appeal to the community granted by that law was from the sentence of the consuls, not from that of this new magistrate." It was also established for the purpose of concentrating in the hands of *one* man, a greater control over the issues of peace and war, and the general subjects of international arrangement. And thus by trick and craft, was tyranny restored in a new, if not from the temporary character of this office, in so permanent a form.

Other examples to the same effect are not wanting. Venice, that figured more than a thousand years, the wonder and rival of the independent States of Europe, originated a democracy, acclimating her laws through the *concilio* of the people, and after various political vicissitudes fell a heartless, cruel, corrupt, and tyrannous oligarchy. Charles the 1st. defeated in his purposes of making himself by force, an absolute Prince, fell upon the stratagem of effecting his object by merging the jurisdiction of the *civil* in the *spiritual* courts, of which latter he was the head. And in our country we are not without instances tending to like results. We have had a national bank, by which a corporation of the federal gov. has been enabled to acquire immense quantities of the lands of sovereign States, while the Government itself, the power that created the corporation, is prohibited in effect from acquiring lands within the limits of the States, by virtue of that clause of the constitution which prohibits to it the exercise of jurisdiction over lands within their limits except *with* their consent, and for the purpose of erecting *forts* and other *needful* public buildings.—Now still further to extend the encroachments of concentrated power it is proposed to raise the President and Senate in supremacy over the constitutional authority of the legislature, to deny to the popular branch of Congress, the right to demand and participate in the abrogation of a pernicious treaty.

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Rhett.) who addressed the committee the other day in opposition to the notice, challenged the friends of the measure to show why it should be passed—he asked with a seeming air of triumph, what good reasons could be assigned in its behalf? There are many, sir, some of which, most important in my estimation, I will endeavor to exhibit. First, Oregon is ours, every inch ours from the 42° to the 54° 40', north latitude inclusive, and being ours, the honor and interests of the country require that we should take possession of it. The American title to Oregon

rests upon several grounds—the rights of discovery by the United States and Spain, and the pre-occupation of the territory by both these powers against England. Up to the period of the views of some gentlemen, a divided jurisdiction over the whole territory. Should such a condition of things be continued? Ought it not to be terminated? When did Great Britain grant a joint usufruct and a divided jurisdiction in her dominions? Never. Her policy has been to get all and give nothing; to grasp all national individuality within the broad limits of a world-wide Empire. Look for example, to the plundered and desolated plains of Afghanistan, to the smoking ruins of the fortress of Hekti's Pab, in New Zealand. Great Britain is securing all she could secure unmolested, independent of the convention. She has established civil and criminal jurisdiction over the country. Her subjects hunt, trap, and fish throughout its limits, they are stripping the lands of their timber, and appropriating the best locations for the purposes of commerce and agriculture. At Vancouver, Colville, Nasqually, and other posts, farms have been opened, and wheat, barley and potatoes are raised in abundance. At Vancouver, in particular, there is a farm nine miles square, supplied with one hundred milch cows, three thousand head of cattle, two thousand five hundred head of sheep, and three hundred brood mares, all the property of the British Puget's Sound Company. She has established thirty-one forts, scattered from the Pacific to the Rocky Mountains, and from Fort Simpson on the north, to Fort Unkappa on the south, which are garrisoned by the servants of the Hudson Bay Company, and are liable at any time to be employed by the Government of Great Britain, to conquer by *force*, what she does not possess by *right*. It has been her constant policy to impress the American settlers in Oregon, with the idea that any settlements they might make to the north of the Columbia, would be dispossessed if necessary, by the bayonet.—Whilst those made or to be made upon the south of that stream, would not be disturbed.

By this device, she has until now, succeeded in limiting the American settlements to the south of the Columbia; in the meantime, she has been occupying the country to the north, converting her temporary huts for the purposes of trading and fishing, into agricultural settlements, and strengthening her numerous trading posts, by arming them for the permanent maintenance of the whole or a large portion of the country.—The effect of this policy has been and will be, to encourage the spirit of British encroachment—it will tend to array the interests of American settlers against their patriotism—it will distract their purposes and paralyze their energies. It is a fact to which we cannot close our eyes, that a lukewarmness prevails to some extent in some of the cities upon the Atlantic seaboard, in regard to the Oregon question. Why is this so? Is it not owing to the apprehension that in case of war,

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to. Why is this so? Is it
a suspicion that in case of war,

American shipping may be destroyed—commerce
crippled, and property lost? Yes—this would
be the answer. Well, may it not be sup-
posed that American emigrants in Oregon, who
have established themselves on the south of the
Columbia, and whose prayers to their govern-
ment for protection, have been so long mocked,
will sympathize in similar apprehensions? It is
but fair to suppose so. For this reason, there-
fore, if for no other, the convention should be
terminated, and the whole of Oregon thrown
open to American settlements, freed from all re-
straints. It is urged, however, that time will
effect every thing for us. How so? Until now it
has effected every thing against us—has been our
greatest enemy. A masterly inactivity—a state
of *vis inertia*, will avail nothing against the schem-
ing policy and active means of Great Britain.
It would be as vain for us to expect to secure the
golden prize of Oregon, by *non* action, as to sup-
pose that the courser who refuses to run, will
beat his speeding adversary. Neither will it
avail us much, to encourage emigration thither
as a substantive and sufficient means of securing
the country. Great Britain in that respect, pos-
sesses abundant means to counteract us. She
can offer the inducement of cherished privileges,
and monopolies of trade, to encourage and aug-
ment emigration; we cannot; the nature of our
institutions forbid it. Devoid of this ability, we
still refuse to grant bounties of money, a rifle, an
axe, a spade, or any thing else, to compensate
for it. The utmost verge of generosity to which
any gentleman has gone, has been to promise to
give our emigrants lands when they themselves
by their numbers have peacefully conquered the
country. Such munificence is certainly obliging.
It is a sublimation of generosity that the hardy
pioneer, who goes forth, amidst dangers and diffi-
culties, to plant the flag of his country upon dis-
tant lands, will hardly be able to appreciate—
will despise. The inducements to emigration,
therefore, belong to Great Britain. What now
of her relative capacity for colonization? The
population of the United States is sparse, a few
millions spread over a vast extent of country, for
the most part devoid of any motive to change
their locations, except that restless and enterpris-
ing spirit which animates American freemen.—
Emigration would extend our settlements, and
render a population already too sparse, still more
sparse. Not so with Great Britain; by coloniza-
tion she would promote her domestic safety, and
at the same time extend her dominions. Her
population is fearfully redundant; the hungering
masses are struggling with a mighty effort to rid
themselves of the horrors and tortures of starva-
tion. Human suffering is taxed to the last point
of endurance, and confederated king and priest-
craft could not, therefore, more effectually secure
themselves against volcanic overthrow, than by
colonizing her gaunt and famishing thousands in a
distant land. Hence the capacity as well as
the inducements to emigration, peculiarly apper-

tain to Great Britain. Another reason for the
termination of the convention, is to be found in
the anxious desire of our fellow citizens in
Oregon, to be aggregated by our laws and
institutions with the Government of the United
States. They are wearied and disheartened with
the excitements and uncertainties of their pres-
ent situation. Hear them speak in their own
noble and touching language for themselves.

"Agitated by the uncertainties of national dis-
putes; assailable from the ocean on one side, and
surrounded elsewhere, by warlike Indians, and
liable to be crushed from every quarter; moreov-
er, impelled by the necessity of domestic govern-
ment and internal police, we have, according to
the immemorial usage of Americans, formed for
ourselves, a government, and enacted laws, in-
formation concerning which, has already been
transmitted to the seat of government. We have
at present, residing among us, an Indian Agent,
commissioned by the War Department, in whom
resides the only trace of national authority found
within this territory. Your memorandists earnestly
desire to impress you with the dangers by which
they are encompassed, and the difficulties which
perplex them; in the absence of all government
adequate to their defence from foes abroad, and
the preservation of internal peace and order."—
For these reasons, from motives of humanity,
duty, friendship, and affection.

I would throw the axis of American laws over our
brethren in Oregon. I would feel, should we omit
to do so, that they were justified, yea, necessi-
tated to look abroad, or to their own individuality
as an independent people for protection. And what
have we learned upon this latter part already?
So long neglected by the father land, they have
already broached the subject of their political in-
dependency. Accompanying the recently pub-
lished map of Oregon and California, by Mitchell,
the following note may be found: "Two politi-
cal parties already exist among the emigrants,
one of which is in favor of independence, and
the other of adhering to the United States."

"Many of the Americans, besides a number of
the individuals in the employ of the Hudson
Bay Company, contemplate the formation of
an independent government, the occupation of
the whole of the disputed territory, and to ob-
tain, if possible, from the Hudson Bay Compa-
ny, the cession of all their forts and trading
houses." To prevent such a result—to prevent
the establishment of a rival government upon
our own borders, which, in the nature of things,
must become our enemy rather than our ally
and friend, I would grant what is so justly
asked of us by the citizens of Oregon. I would
give the notice, not only with a view to ulterior
measures for their protection against the British
and the numerous savage bands that surround
them, but because many gentlemen suppose that
until the notice is given such measures cannot be
taken consistently with the convention and our
national faith. It is also a part of the obliga-

tions of the Government to extend the protection of its laws over the citizens of Oregon, as an equivalent for their allegiance and obedience to its behests. The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. VANCE] has described the convention as "a substitute for war," as an alternative of war, and has proclaimed in beautiful and figurative language that the abrogation of the convention would be *ipso facto* to provoke or declare war. I differ from him in this position. I look upon the convention as a mere temporary arrangement between the parties; liable to be revoked according to an express stipulation, without affording any just cause of war to either one of them. The same gentleman admits our title to be valid and exclusive, yet he says he would not go to war to vindicate it. What are we to infer from these inharmonious positions? Nothing else that I can perceive than that he would abandon our title, unless we could obtain a peaceable recognition of it by Great Britain—at all events, that we should continue the bargain by which we admitted Britain to the freedom of Oregon, rather than rescind it, and exclude her from it by war. Would the gentleman apply the same doctrine to the patriotic State of Alabama, if, by some improvident act Great Britain had been allowed to intrude herself into that State? No—certainly not. Yet, having considered the validity of our title to Oregon, he would find it difficult, on principle, to distinguish between the cases. The gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. RHETT] also joins in the cry of war, and deprecates such an event, not only as a calamity in itself, but also as a measure tending, by inevitable consequence, to strengthen the tendencies of the Government towards centralization and consolidation. He asserts that the war of the Revolution engulfed us in federalism after the adoption of the present constitution of government—that upon the termination of the last war, we found ourselves in a like situation. All this may be true, yet, sir, it either proves too much or it proves nothing—it proves as much against a just war as an unjust one—against a war of defence as of aggression. Yet the gentleman would scarcely say that the Revolution cost us too much because it burthened us for a period with a debt and taxes, and the misrule of federalism. Nor would he, I presume, say that it would have been better for us to have borne longer, and forever, the insult to our flag upon the high seas, and the outrage of impressing our seamen into a foreign service, than to have resisted these unbearable injuries at the cost of an addition to our pension list, and other consequences which gave birth to a National Bank.

Differing from the gentleman in the views he has expressed, I predicate it as the true maxim that our only inquiry should be, first, to be "sure we are right and then to go ahead"—that we should "ask nothing that is not right and submit to nothing that is wrong." If Oregon is

ours, let us take it. If the path of duty is beset with danger, still let us press forward as it becomes brave and patriotic men to do. Hesitation from fear would be cowardice—from *partisanship* wickedness or folly. But gentlemen say there is no occasion either for fear or hesitation, that all may be attained by negotiation.—Upon what assurance is this assertion rested? Certainly not upon our experience. If we consult that as a test, we find that negotiation has nearly always been the cause of injury—the source of disaster. Negotiation has lost us much—would have lost us more, and has gained us nothing. Jay's treaty authorized the anomalous right of foreigners residing elsewhere to hold and transmit lands by descent within our limits—it admitted British subjects to the privileges of ingress and egress, whilst it excluded American citizens from the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company. It did still more—it admitted a Trojan horse into the very heart and citadel of the country. Under the deceptive mask of commerce, it admitted the British naval power into the waters of the Mississippi, from its mouth to its sources. Great Britain coveted this last acquisition as an object of the first importance. She foresaw the attendant advantages it would secure to her over a young but formidable rival. American diplomacy did not heed so vast and dangerous a concession. The thundering engines of the Jupiter Olympus of America—the immortal Fulton, had not then furrowed the turbid bosom of the great father of rivers—the course of that mighty river was still through the dark dense forests which had not yet been laid low by the woodman's axe. The red man was unconscious that his native power was to fade before the advances of the pale-faces—that the graves of his fathers were to become the seats of cultivated fields and gorgeous palaces. These things—these mighty revolutions were in the dim distance, and American diplomacy, with hedged vision and unpenetrating forethought, overlooked or disregarded them. What further? In 1818 and 1827, diplomacy, with blundering stupidity, offered to sever Oregon by the 49th parallel; conceding to Great Britain the country to the north, together with the free navigation of the Columbia. In 1845, it reoffered the 49th parallel; and last, though not least, by its incurable blindness and oblivious delays, has involved our title to Oregon, originally clear, in confusion and doubt; for it will be recollected that in 1818, Great Britain set up no claim to the joint occupancy of the country. The great body of the people, and especially those of the West, have no confidence in negotiation. They would as readily subscribe to the truth of the *black arts* as to the efficiency of *diplomatic arts*—to the realities of Herr Alexander's necromancy as to the ability of a minister to settle satisfactorily by negotiation the vexed difficulties of the Oregon question. At their vast assemblages they have given unequi-

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cal utterance to this sentiment. At the Bal-
 timore convention they demanded the whole of
 Oregon—in my own State their banners have
 been blazoned with the mottoes of "OREGON
 WITHOUT NEGOTIATION"—"*all or none*"—"now
 or never." These are the honest straightfor-
 ward ebullitions of the people. The people
 are sovereign, let their voice be heard and
 obeyed.

Oregon is ours, our title to it is established
 "by irrefragable facts and arguments"—it does
 not therefore present a case for negotiation and
 compromise. *It is above the power of govern-
 ment, without the express consent of the people,
 to dismember its territories, or to transfer the al-
 legiance of its citizens.* The function of gov-
 ernment is to preserve and protect both—terri-
 tory is the *base* and the people the *lever* of gov-
 ernment, to alienate one or the other would be
 to destroy the very props which support it; such
 alienation would be a violation of the contract
 of government; it cannot trade or give away to
 a foreign jurisdiction either its *lands* or *citizens*.

The same doctrine was avowed by Mr. Clay
 upon the question of the alienation of Texas,
 though not to the same extent. In 1820, as a
 member of this body, he offered the following
 resolution as expressive of his opinion:

"Resolved, That the Constitution of the
 United States vests in Congress the power to
 dispose of the territory belonging to them; and
 that no *treaty*, purporting to alienate any portion
 thereof is valid, without the concurrence of Con-
 gress."

Texas in that case was not different from Ore-
 gion in this. Texas was a mere territorial pos-
 session, Oregon is the same. If it was wrong
 then to negotiate away Texas, and such is the
 judgment of the American people, it is equally
 wrong now to negotiate away Oregon; and if
 it may be supposed so unwarrantable an act will
 be perpetrated, a corresponding cry will be
 raised to that which was raised in regard to
 Texas, and will be kept up until lost Oregon is
 reclaimed, peaceably if we can, forcibly if we
 must.

Mr. Polk has also repeatedly affirmed his con-
 viction of the validity of our title, and his wil-
 lingness to assert it. In 1829, in the course of
 a speech upon a bill to extend our laws over
 Oregon, he said: "If it shall, at any time,
 be deemed expedient by the American Con-
 gress to pass this bill, or one of its import,
 the course is a plain one: First, give the twelve
 months' notice that these treaties (1818 and
 1827) are annulled and abrogated, and then
 adopt the measure. No national treaty would
 then be violated, because none would exist.—
 The national power is pledged not to violate the
 national engagements. *In the mean time, he
 would not to permit Great Britain, or any
 power on earth, to take exclusive possession of
 any portion of the country. No foreign power
 should be permitted to colonize there.* He

WOULD PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF AMERICAN
 CITIZENS THERE." In 1841, in a letter to a
 meeting in Cincinnati, he said: "Let Texas
 be annexed, and the authority and laws of the
 United States be established and maintained, *as
 also in the Oregon Territory; and let the fixed
 policy of our Government be, not to permit
 Great Britain, or any other foreign power, to
 plant a colony, or hold dominion over any por-
 tion of the people or territory of either.*" In

his inaugural address, he declared that our title
 to Oregon was "clear and unquestionable;" and
 in his late annual message he reiterates that
 "Oregon is a part of the North American
 continent, to which it is confidently affirmed; the
 title of the United States is the best in exist-
 ence." Again, he denies that the British pre-
 tensions of title to Oregon can be maintained to
 any portion of the Oregon territory upon any
 principle of public law recognized by nations."

According to these arguments and these senti-
 ments we have nothing to fear. James K. Polk
 cannot consistently; and may I not say, will
 not yield, any portion of our rights to Oregon—
 his heart is too large and his firmness too stern
 for any such miserable concession. The great
 example of Jackson in our late controversy with
 France, and with England *this day thirty-one years*

ago, when, amidst the thunders and flame of
 war, he proclaimed victory to American arms,
 is before him; and he will not fail from impulse,
 as well as from duty, to emulate it. Great oc-
 casions call forth great qualities. Napoleon, in
 eight months, mustered an army which sur-
 prised and awed the combined powers of Eu-
 rope. If war is to come from the assertion of
 our "unquestionable" rights, let us prepare to
 meet it as becomes a brave and chivalric peo-
 ple. Let the powers of the Government and
 of the country be brought into the fullest requi-
 sition—let our army be enlarged and invigorated,
 our militia organized and drilled—let our inter-
 nal and external marines be armed for the con-
 test—let all America become as a camp resound-
 ing with the preparations of war. Such means
 are worthy of the occasion and of the crisis; by
 them, wisely systematized and vigorously ex-
 erted, we can make a demonstration of physical
 and moral power which will exalt republicanism
 in the eyes of the world, and crush the ar-
 rogant pretensions of royal supremacy. Upon
 the classic plains of Marathon, Greece crushed
 the gorgeous panoply of Persia, and vindicated
 the superiority of free over despotic institutions.

We are wiser and stronger than Greece, and
 wherefore may we not expect to emulate her
 glorious achievements, if a conflict shall come
 between us and Great Britain. It would only
 be in such a conflict that the sinews and strength
 of freemen could be fully displayed—that the
 moral sublimity of republicanism would loom
 forth as a phoenix from the smoke and thunders
 of war.

If Mr. Polk has offered the 49th parallel as

the basis of a compromise with Great Britain, why did he do so? Not because, as some gentlemen have intimated, he was in fact in favor of that line, but because, as he says in his message, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States was authorized in 1813, by his predecessor, to offer the 49th parallel, and the free navigation of the Columbia. In explanation of this offer, he says in his message: "Had this been a new question, coming under discussion for the first time, this proposition would not have been made. The extraordinary and wholly inadmissible demands of the British Government, and the rejection of the proposition made in defence alone to what had been done by my predecessors, and the implied obligations which their acts seemed to impose, afford satisfactory evidence that no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected. With this conviction, the proposition of compromise which had been made and rejected was, by my direction, subsequently withdrawn, and our title to the whole Oregon Territory asserted, and, as it is believed, maintained by irrefragable facts and arguments." Having thus freed himself from the embarrassments thrown around the question by the conduct of his predecessors, he falls back upon his old position of the *validity and exclusiveness* of our title, and recommends the notice now under discussion, and such other measures as in the opinion of Congress may be necessary to give effect to our title and protection to our citizens in Oregon. In these measures I will cordially support him; my only regret is that the President did not, after the abrupt rejection of the offer of compromise by the British Minister, say to him: "Sir, we cannot compromise, here let us agree to waive the twelve months' notice, and terminate the convention." This would have been a course consistent with the President's opinion of our title, and with the dignity and temper of the nation. Whilst I have thus expressed my perfect confidence in the ability and patriotism of the Administration, it is due to candor to aver, that if Mr. Polk should yield upon this great question, after the repeated assurances he has given to the contrary, I will be greatly and sadly disappointed. Nor will I be the only political friend who will share in this feeling: my constituents, who polled for him a larger majority, perhaps, than any other constituency of equal numbers in the United States, will as deeply sympathize in it as myself. And may I not say that the great body of the American people every where will do so? The records of the great Baltimore Convention would authorize the assertion. I approach Mr. Polk not as a *courtier* or *flatterer*. I ask nothing at his hands except a faithful and efficient execution of the *pledges* upon and by virtue of which he came into power; this much I have a right to ask and expect, and I therefore call upon him, in the *independence* of a constituent and freeman, to *fulfil* them. The Romans denounced as *impious*

any man who dared avow the treason of *deliberating* the territories of the empire; the sentiment exists in this country, and will, as the hand follows the dictates of the heart, be the means of fixing its *Cain mark* upon who may provide its resentment. I warn men and small—those who aspire and those who do not—to beware of the hostile influence of this question. It is the great question of the age, pregnant with a power to make and unmake empires and administrations. The ungodly and unprincipled masses will adhere to a just war, against politicians, against administrations—they will never desert it. It is a question—it involves their interests, and upon the cords of their patriotism and ambition. No political intrigue can arise, no artificial obstacle deflect it. It is urged a power that knows no limits except those exhausted nature assigns to soaring genius, untrammelled enterprise—its energy is its principle, and its triumph in republican institutions. Its strength may be well illustrated by an experiment recently exhibited, which I take the liberty to relate. A spectator upon the banks of the Potomac, I saw a vessel gallantly sailing before a propitious breeze—walked the waters like a thing of life. "At that moment I was charmed with her grace and dexterity; far was it from appearance that she was to become a helpless hulk; yet in the twinkling of an eye the water rose up around her in the form of a column projecting in the heaven when it had receded, lo! she was a foundered wreck. Need I say that the Oregon question, arousing and combining as it does the passions, and interests of the people, possesses combustible force sufficient to blow up an empire, that may by accident or design be converted into force into action—that it will be in the power of what Colt's sub-marine battery is in physics."

The Texas question defeated great leaders, crushed old formulas—Oregon is still intact. It is the embodiment of the great American principle of progression, extension and expansion. It has been powerful to kindle smouldering fires of the masses into a bright, fervid blaze, but even yet it has not reached its culminating point. It is the form of a new pulse called into action by free institution, rating upon the restless and daring spirit of the Anglo-Saxon blood. Glorious, divine impulse! Let it exert its sway until the world shall be a common republic, and mankind a united brotherhood. Away with the syren cry of compromise, inextinguishable *destiny* inter her iron sceptre to forbid it. Shame! should we *recede* to the 49th parallel whilst *advancing* to the same line? Who will claim himself the advocate of such a measure?

It is said, however, that war will ensue, refuse to compromise by further concessions on all, and that peace is worth more than Oregon; but not without honor. Nothing

to dared avow the treason of *disunion* territories of the empire; the same X sign in this country, and will, as sure I follow the dictates of the heart, find of fixing its Cain mark upon those who do its resentment. I warn great gall—those who aspire and those who are aware of the hostile influence of this. It is the great question of the age, and with a power to make and unmake and administrations. The unbought eloquence of the masses will adhere to it, against politicians, against administrators, they will never desert it. It is their interest, and strikes at the roots of their patriotism and a nation's No political intrigue can arrest it—obstacles defeat it. It is urged on by it knows no limits except those which nature assigns to soaring genius and enterprise—its energy is in free and its triumph in republican institutions may be well illustrated by recently exhibited, which I will not weary to relate. A spectator upon the Potomac, I saw a vessel gaily and flying before a propitious breeze—"she waters like a thing of life"—for she was charmed with her grace and beauty from appearance that she was a helpless hulk; yet in the twinkling the water rose up around her in the column projecting in the heavens, and she reeled, lo! she was a foundering vessel I say that the Oregon question combining as it does the prejudices, and interests of the people, possesses a force sufficient to blow up any ship at may by accident or design kindle into action—that it will be in politics a sub-marine battery in physics.

As question defeated great leaders and formulas—Oregon is still more potent the embodiment of the great American of progression, extension and exert has been powerful to kindle the fires of the masses into a bright and, but even yet it has not reached its point. It is the form of a new impetus into action by free institutions open the restless and daring spirit of the blood. Glorious, divine impulse, its sway until the world shall become republic, and mankind a united brotherhood with the syren cry of concession promise, inexorable destiny interposes preptre to forbid it. Shame! Why precede to the 49th parallel while Brainerd to the same line? Who will profit the advocate of such a measure?

However, that war will ensue, if we compromise by further concessions, or that peace is worth more than all of not without honor. Nothing is de

rogated from honorable peace, it should be cherished as a national duty and a christian blessing. All that has been said of its benignity and the beauty and gentleness of its way, is true. But still it will be recollected that the history of mankind proves that peace can only be preserved by a resort to the strong arm of war, when honor and invaded rights require it. The peace which has done so much for us—which has extended our settlements from an arid Plymouth Rock, far upon the prairies of the "far west," which has enabled us to grow with rapid growth from infancy to the vigor of young manhood—from feebleness to the rank and power of the first nations of the earth—the peace which has wrought all this, is the *price* of two wars—the *ahili* generated in the crucibles of the revolution, and of the war of 1812. Peace—permanent peace, therefore, is an argument in favor of decisive measures in regard to Oregon. It is for England to count the cost and dread the consequences of an unjust war with the United States—such a calamity will cut off her supplies of cotton, stop her spinlles and thus turn thousands of her operatives out of employment. These operatives will have to be appeased by large concessions, or otherwise they will become our active allies—a festering thorn in the very heart of our enemy. Where too will be O'Connell, and oppressed Ireland, in such an event? Will they not avail themselves of such an opportunity to strike for *repeal and liberty*, and if so, will not our enemy feel the necessity of exerting his greatest strength at home? I would avert war by every proper precaution—by every honorable means, but if it must come as the consequence of a lawful assertion of our rights, then let it come. In the language of a great figure of the French revolution, I would say to Americans, as he said to French men: "Us, messieurs, one cry befits: to arms! Let Americans, as with the threat of the whirlwind, sound only to arms."

I regret, Mr. Chairman, that a spirit of criminality has grown up in the progress of this debate. Upon this as upon all other great questions of state, men are prone, and have a right to differ. The office of statesmanship is not to aggravate these differences, but to remedy them. In the legitimate field of debate, the conflict of mind may correct error and elicit truth, but in the arena of political gladiation, it can scarcely achieve any other reward than the *relat* of the bravo and the rancor of an enemy. Let the opponents of this measure, therefore, forbear unkind allusions, and especially, let its friends confine themselves to the use of that weapon which is mighty and will prevail—*truth—omnipotent truth*.

As a member of this body, coming from the Great West, I voted for the annexation of Texas, the modification of the present oppressive and unjust tariff, and for the rule of House which excluded petitions praying an unlawful interference with the institutions of the slave-holding

States. I voted for these measures upon their merits, and from a conviction of duty. If now there are gentlemen from the south or elsewhere, who cannot go with me in the support of Oregon, it is doubtless because they feel themselves restrained by a sense of duty. If we cannot agree upon the measure under consideration, let us agree to disagree. When the first blast of the war trumpet shall be heard resounding over the broad face of our country, then will there be no longer disagreement. The north and the south, the east and the west will crowd to the field of danger as the knights of the tournament, proud and envious of each others achievements and glory.

I am utterly and inexorably opposed, Mr. Chairman, to any compromise which surrenders in any way or to any foreign people, territory to the south of 54° 40'. I have arisen to resist this project of secession at 49°, pointedly and especially. I oppose it first, because it would be a weak surrender of clearly ascertained right, and a bad compromise of honor—a double blunder which chips our national power and taints our national fame—because it casts from us one-half, that half which gives to Oregon all its great value—because it emasculates Oregon in the sight and for the benefit of our rival—pulls us down to build up our arrogant adversary—because it dismembers from us, in inconsiderate levity, the great islands of Vancouver and Washington, (the latter worthy of its name) the very keys of the Pacific, hurls them away with their grand forests, their innumerable harbors, their unparalleled fisheries, and commanding position. And with all these advantages, do we voluntarily bedeck our rival with these too, go the innumerable islands which mask the coast and the bays, harbors and inlets, which indent it. Thus, too, with crowning folly, do we leave ourselves shorn of every harbor in Oregon, saving the opening of the Columbia, itself rendered valueless by the surrender of the maritime region which commands it.

Commercially, indeed, by such a concession we voluntarily decapitate ourselves upon the Pacific seaboard—we lose that portion of Oregon which bears the same relation to the Pacific, in furnishing a commercial marine upon that ocean, which New England now bears upon the Atlantic. The American marine which traverses the Atlantic to and fro, is owned and navigated by the people of New England. The American or *British* marine which will whiten the Pacific and carry direct trade to Asia, Polynesia, and south to the Atlantic Capes, will be built, owned, and navigated by a similar people, who shall dwell north of the 49th parallel. This must naturally come to pass, because the harbors, bays, timber, and material to give existence to a marine, exist there in combination, and there too, are the fisheries which nurse seamen. Moreover, it is upon this line of coast that the natural passages and avenues from the interior valleys of the

continent, descending by the great branches of the Columbia, *dehouché* upon the western seaboard. Thus do the geographical positions, topography of the country, the climate, the concentration there of the various elements of maritime development unite to exalt the *significant* value of this northern half of Oregon. The contest for the possession of this territory by the two great commercial rivals of the age is again the struggle for the "golden fleece," commenced in Argonautic times, transferred in our day from the Bosphorus, and Euxine, to that belt of territory which links together the valley of the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean—the western world with the golden orient.—To the nautical people, whose flag floats over maritime Oregon, and wings its way thence over every wave in innumerable ships—must *calient*, agricultural California and Mexico, pay the Colchian tribute which pours from a rural people, into the lap of commerce. Why then disintegrate this budding corner of our vineyard? Have we nursed it so long only to throw its ripening fruit to our domineering step-mother! But the peace of the nation it is alleged, is in danger! How? Does the tame surrender of Vancouver's Island, which commands the Columbia, of Washington Island and the intermediate coasts which envelope Vancouver itself—of the controlling keys to Western America to England! Does the planting of the Lion in the very Thermopylae of our empire to choke our path and stop short our destiny?—How? Is it by such degrading acts of concession, that we are to release the republic from jeopardy and insure permanent peace? No sir; on the contrary, such sickly submission—such degrading concessions will provoke war—will be likely to plunge us into the jaws of defeat, and set over us an arbitrary, jealous and rapacious rival—for such is the character of Great Britain. Such are some of the prodigious advantages which this debated capitulation at 49°, surrender to our rival, and such the contingent if not the probable catastrophe in which it would leave *our* republic and *our* people.

But it is not by thus establishing a rival power in impregnable control of our western seaboard—by throwing away from our people the infinite markets of the Pacific and its infinite commerce, that the series of disasters is closed—these follies will generate new dangers which must follow them. Great Britain already owns eight provinces upon this continent, containing 2,800,000 square miles. The area of of the United States, including Texas and *all* Oregon, does not exceed 2,318,000 square miles, 482,000 square miles less than the present British territory upon this continent! The provinces of New Brunswick and the two Canadas, coterminous with the territory of the United States, envelope us from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the northwestern lakes, and thence onward, in part by the 49th parallel, to the Rocky Mountains. Through this extent of country, Great

Britain has pushed cordons of posts, fortified in strength and equipped for defensive or aggressive measures—over the residue is planted the systematic military corporation of the Hudson's Bay, whose trading positions, located with faultless judgment, dot the whole with military stations, seal it from the rest of mankind, and draw from it immense revenues by the stringent discipline and admirable economy and silence of their operations. Such is our present geographical relation upon the North and West. The dangers which impend over us upon this immense front have been demonstrated in the events of the last war. Is it not a fatal blunder thus to weaken ourselves and strengthen and embolden our enemy? In that war—without ship-canals to admit her war-steamers into our inland seas—England destroyed Oswego, burned Buffalo—by her savage allies reduced Chicago—and by Brock, conquered all of Michigan. What will she be apt to do *now*, efficiently established in every position held by her at that time, and reinforced by the possession of Northern Oregon, whence to co-operate in the most compact strength with the hostile measures of the Canadas? Recently Great Britain has resisted, as far as possible, the annexation of Texas; and why? Because closely allied with a minor republic, wedged between the United States and Mexico, she grasped at an overland communication between her West Indian and Oregon possessions, and beheld *us* thus hooped in north, south, east, and west, by the unbroken circle of her own and her subsidized subjects! Thus have I aimed briefly to sketch the geographical view of this question, and attract attention to its very serious importance. But a flood of brilliant, solid, and animating developments are evolved by taking a commercial view. To elucidate this, allow me incidentally to sketch the strides—the bloody footprints—of British acquisition! Over the whole expanse of the Atlantic, we find her established in imperial ascendancy—she has New Foundland, Nova Scotia, Bermudas, the Bahamas—the islands which freckle the Gulf of Mexico are hers—she occupies Honduras and the Mosquito shore in Central America. By these possessions she covers the whole Atlantic front of North America, absorbs half of all its commerce, intimidates its people, and awaits the moment for any aggressive swoop upon their territories—she has Trinidad, Guiana, and the Falkland islands upon the coast of South America. The western coast of Africa is dotted with her posts,—she has St. Helena and the Cape of Good Hope,—she is now conquering the republics of the La Plata, and poised herself to plunge upon Brazil! The Mediterranean is bridled and controlled by Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands,—her own island masks North Europe, the Baltic, and the upper Atlantic. In the Indian Ocean she is just as potentially posted, and wields supreme sway. The Mauritius, the

Scheyelles, Hindostan, Ceylon, Singapore command the cape route to China,—Aden controls the Red Sea and the overland route from the Mediterranean to the Oriental countries. In the Persian Gulf she is fortified.—In China she has Chusan and Hong-Kong, and stretching towards the Southern Pole, Australasia, Van-Dieman's land, New Zealand, Norfolk island! Thus has England entrenched herself in impregnable power over four-fifths of the girdling globe! What is there left to contest with her? Is any corner left free from the military *espionage* with which she has covered every sea, and suspended herself over every coast? One ocean, one coast, and one people remain, not as yet engulfed in her comprehensive maw. England has as yet no territorial position upon the western coast of America from Bhering's Straits to Cape Horn—None in the great North Pacific between America and Asia. She is now preparing to settle down upon the yet unoccupied space at all points at once. Around Cape Horn she occupies the Falkland and South Shetland Islands—From the Mosquito shore she grasps the Isthmus of Panama. Give her Northern Oregon, and her positions on both fronts of the Pacific are complete—Her bands of fortified posts join ends around the world in each zone, and in both hemispheres. The Sandwich Islands, Mexico, Peru, and other small-fry people of the world fall to her naturally in this general harvest, and thus will be consummated her great policy of conquering all rivalry, either in arms or commerce, upon the high seas or among their adjacent maritime nations. That one people to whom the just Creator has reserved the power and position to avert this consummation and to vindicate the commercial freedom of the supine nations of the world, is the American Republic! Northern Oregon placed in the only open gap of this British net, which every where else entraps the world, must be disentangled from its meshes—*All* of it must be saved, and with it saved to the American people the direct trade of the Oriental world.

This must be saved to thwart the unholy avarice with which British power straddles the globe and strains to gorge mankind. This *must* and *can* and *will* be done. It is a great duty due from the American people to themselves, to mankind, and the age at which mankind have found themselves arrived!

"Mr. McC. here exhibited several beautifully colored maps—one showing the geographical formation of the United States; another the localities of the possessions of Great Britain throughout the world; and another showing the distances from England to China, by the Cape of Good Hope, and overland by the Mediterranean and Red sea to India, and the distance from England across the Atlantic over the United States, and across the Pacific to China, and the East Indies—proving that the latter route was the nearest and best, avoiding the crossing of the

Equator, an object most essential to a successful trade with the countries of Asia, in provisions, a principal article with us." Numerous members crowded around Mr. McC., and for a time arrested the course of his remarks; resuming his remarks, he said—

The time has arrived, Mr. Chairman, for the American people to appreciate the importance of an intimate and extensive trade carried on directly from their western seaboard, with the innumerable, wealthy, and intelligent people of China, the Indies, Polynesia, and South America. Our present trade with the European nations who are for the most part engaged in the same occupation and produce the same articles for commerce, as ourselves, is considered of paramount importance in this Congress, and its regulation occupies a large share of our labors and anxious deliberations. Now China alone is equal in population, extent, and resources, to the aggregate amount of all the European nations! This single empire fronts five thousand miles upon the Pacific; opposite to Oregon. Her outline is 12,000 miles. The area of her territory 5,000,000 square miles, and her population was 367,000,000, in the year 1813. No people amongst mankind surpass the Chinese in civilization, knowledge and intelligence. Their agriculture sends us tea, sugar, raw silk, spices, dyes, fruits and liquors—their manufactures furnish for traffic, porcelain, silks, crapes, nankeens, satins, velvets, chalis, brocades, mat carpeting, ivory, fine woolens, toys, fire-works, metals, white copper, the rare iron of Formosa, tin, gums and paints, and other articles infinite in number, and excellent in quality. For these we have for barter, the provisions, the lead, the raw cotton, the tobacco, the lumber, furs, and fish of the Valley of the Mississippi and Oregon—besides China, are many equally prolific countries—Japan, with a population of 41,000,000, Cochin China 31,000,000, Burmah 13,000,000, and British India 145,000,000.—All these great countries lying around the Pacific connected with Oregon by that glorious ocean, and by Oregon with us, swarming with 650,000,000 of people, and teeming with elements of commerce in infinite exuberance.—All these people, and countries, and elements, are awaiting the arrival of the American people and American commerce, about to descend to the Pacific by the great Columbia, and leap in radiant lines from our western shores across its bosom.—Our trade beyond the Southern Capes at present languishes under the superior advantages enjoyed by Great Britain, whose India possessions supply to China raw cotton, indigo, opium, rice, and other agricultural products. From Oregon we can successfully meet and overthrow this British monopoly.—Without dwelling upon particulars—what does History teach us with regard to the trade of the Oriental world? In ancient days it made for itself overland routes, peopled the deserts with cities, and scattered barbarism in its front. It gave splendor to the Grecian monarch-

chiefs in Syria and in Egypt—It retarded the downfall of Constantinople for many centuries—It raised Venice from an obscure republic to the rank of the most potent kingdoms. How have Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, been exalted by its possession and depressed by its loss! Finally, it has now become the monopoly of British military and naval supremacy. Hence does she draw that infinite wealth which enables her to cover the globe with her political network, to ruffle all nations by her arrogance, and to dazzle mankind with her blazing greatness—and where is the only rival whose position and strength marks her as the next in order to grasp this brilliant destiny, and wrench it from the British Lion? It is the American Republic, stretching across the continent, and receiving through Oregon the golden stream of Oriental commerce! At present the Oriental trade of Great Britain is more lucrative to her, and larger in amount, than all the commerce of the Americans. Whilst England controls India, and all the routes of commerce as she now does, and trade to China continues to traverse the long routes passing beneath the equator, American trade, elsewhere so thrifty, must continue to languish. The American trade to all countries beyond the southern capes, in 1844, was—

Imports,	\$9,164,159
Exports,	6,083,044.

an unhealthy trade with the balance of \$3,081,115 against us. This trade too is confined chiefly to teas for home consumption and it will soon happen that we too, like the rest of the Atlantic nations will receive our supplies of Oriental productions through the ports of Britain. What withhold us, then, from turning our energies towards the setting sun!—from finding there the great remedy of new markets, and a new and infinite commerce, matching the wants and energies of our great people?—where the great arteries of the continent, the Missouri and the Columbia, lend their navigable channels to our inland transports? How entirely practicable is this great change in the channels of commerce, and how close upon the time of its successful consummation, let us learn from facts and events starting up beneath our eye. A great overland commerce is now in active existence through the heart of the Russian Empire, between Kiatka, upon the northern frontier of China, and St. Petersburg. The amount of this commerce in 1843 is thus given in the Russian reports—

Imports from China,	\$12,038,054
Exports to China,	8,685,805

Kiatka is in latitude 50° 21' north, and St. Petersburg in 59° 56'. The distance between these two points is 5,000 miles of land travel, in a hyperborean climate! Yet furs, Russia leather, hides, linens, cotton and woollen fabrics are exported by this channel from the Baltic. In return is received 4,600,000 pounds of tea, valued at \$5,969,350, silks, shawls, and other fabrics, at \$6,038,705—

Is the great enterprise of the American people then unequal, in the face of this Russian success, to the small achievement of connecting the navigable waters of the Missouri and Columbia, and prosecuting direct trade between the valley of the Mississippi and munificent China? The memorial from Oregon upon our tables informs us that already 10,000 Americans have opened a wagon road from the Missouri to the Pacific—that they have established a government, made laws, and originated agriculture, commerce, and manufactures—that they have erected there a domestic seaport upon our western seaboard.

Our fleet of whale ships is in occupation of the North Pacific between Oregon and Asia.—The Sandwich Islands have become an independent and commercial nation under the influence and by the counsel of American citizens residents therein. China has recently made with us a treaty full of amicable advancements.—Do all these concurring events portend nothing? Can neither these nor the petition of our isolated and banished countrymen in Oregon, nor want of new markets by the people of the interior, nor the danger to them, to our country and to our honor from the evidently alarmed arrogance of England, stir us to action and kindle our lethargic patriotism? Here is the statement of the vigorous and valuable whaling business now prosecuted by our citizens chiefly in the North Pacific and for which we have refused to create a domestic port on that Ocean:—

675 vessels, of	197,186 tons
Seamen,	36,584
Capital,	\$16,429,620
Proceeds,	19,610,463
Total value,	\$36,040,083

Do not such immense national interests as these demand our prompt and efficient attention? or has wisdom fled from our councils and do lethargy and timidity reign in sombre domination in this Representative Hall of 20,000,000 of brave freemen? The hawk-eyed rulers of England embracing the whole world in their plans of dominion, watch all these events and are prepared at once to push their empire to its culminating climax and to crush every danger that may show its head. Hence, a few years since, having no better excuse for waging a war upon China than the refusal of her Emperor to permit her to poison his subjects with opium; she availed herself of that, and forced him by the thunders of her cannon, to open the Chinese ports to the introduction of that destructive drug, and to pay her an indemnity of \$25,000,000 for the task. We commiserate with feelings bordering on piteous contempt, the effeminacy and want of public spirit of China, in submitting to this indignity, this outrageous wrong, but what is the difference between China and the United States? We have submitted to the dismemberment of Maine and Massachusetts, and have offered

to give away half of Oregon as the price of that peace with England, which China first defied and only sought when she could do no better. China—a power that escaped the world-conquests of Alexander the Great—China that for some two centuries enjoyed the blessings of peace with all the world—has been made to bow in humiliation before the Lion of the petty, barren island of England. Yes, China with her great walls, circumventing her vast dominions; with her 4402 walled cities; with her 439 castles to guard her frontiers; and her 1159 triumphal arches, has been humbled before the cross of St. George, and all this that she might become the consumer of a noxious drug, produced in British India, that she might be made to minister to British avarice and rapacity! Is such an event to pass unheeded?—Does it not admonish the different nations of the earth, from a common sentiment of danger and self preservation, to rise up and resist the onward and conquering march of the great dictator of the world? Shall it be said that this great republic from motives of fear, has ingloriously surrendered its dismembered territories to Great Britain, as the price of peace, still further to swell the measure of her overshadowing and portentous power? No—never. The disastrous consequences of so shameful and infamous a concession are forewarned in the bloody and tragical pages of British acquisition and conquest. Look to plundered and reeking India, and there behold with horror the forecast of what probably would be our fate. There in 1612 Great Britain begged permission of the Emperor of one of the most splendid and extensive monarchies in the world to found a factory, there now she owns four empires and six provinces, containing 500,000 square miles, and a subjugated and dependant population of 100,000,000 souls. Let us look and learn!—

"Land of the sun! what foot invades
Thy Pagods and thy pillared shades—
Thy cavern shrines, and Idol stones,
Thy Monarchs and their thousand Thrones:
'Tis he of Britain—fierce in wrath
He comes, and India's diadems
Lie scattered in his ruinous path.—
His blood-hounds he adorns with gems,
Torn from the violated necks,
Of many a young and loved Sultana;
Maidens within their pure Zenana;
Priests in the very fane he slaughters,
And chokes up with the glittering wrecks
Of golden shrines the sacred waters!"

But more wonderful, Mr. Chairman, than all other arguments, which I need determine the wisdom of securing *now* by our action the whole

of Oregon is the distinctness with which the necessary progress of our nation is delineated, as it were, by the finger of the Creator himself, in the geographical formation of our northern continent. This formation is as much the reverse of the other continents of the world as are our political institutions to those of the people who inhabit *them*—*theirs* being based upon the subjection of mankind, *ours* upon perfect individual freedom and equality. Two great mountain chains traverse our continent—the Alleghenies near the Atlantic, and the Rocky mountains near the Pacific—the country filling the great trough of the continent between these barriers is an immense undulating plane of calcareous soil. This plane passes from the Gulf of Mexico to the Hyperborean seas, and embraces the great valleys of the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence, the Hudson's Bay, and the Mackenzie, flowing to the Arctic circle. Verdant prairies form the dividing ridges between these valleys, without interfering with the grand uniformity of the general surface. Without this rim of mountains is the maritime region, embracing the original thirteen States upon the Atlantic, and that embracing California and Oregon on the Pacific. Within, the rivers rising around the walls of this great amphitheatre, and flowing towards the centres of the different basins, discharge themselves in great arteries towards the different cardinal points of the compass. Of these, the valley of the Mississippi is our own, and so as yet is Oregon, which connects it with the Pacific. By the Columbia and Missouri is formed the great route from the interior to the Pacific. By the main Mississippi, the Ohio and the St. Lawrence pass the routes to the Gulf and the north Atlantic. These streams, connected by art, form channels of transit directly across and through every part of the continent. This is not the case in the old continents, for in Europe and Asia, the Alps in the one and the Hymalaih mountains in the other, form a great boss in the centre, from which radiate the great rivers, separating the land into distinct and isolated fragments.

It is this intimate relationship formed by an infinity of confluent streams and inseparably interwoven by an immense internal navigation, that demonstrates the essential importance of maritime Oregon, to fill out the symmetry and completeness of our Union! The various interests and variety of productions of a single people dwelling within the Mississippi valley, and stretching to both oceans, must secure the *union* and *unity* of our great republic. To stop short of this would leave our territory unbalanced and our Union in jeopardy.

